

Age Group	Percentage
18-24	15%
25-34	25%
35-44	30%
45-54	20%
55-64	10%
65+	5%

Your selected stories, with their notes and sources.

Tiny Food

Marko, this one reached you through talking about what is watched. Here is a story about Rosa, who has her granddaughter every afternoon of the week.

Rosa has a plot in the community garden, the one with the beans. In early summer the beans have to be tied to their poles with string. It is a job for two hands, and there is no talking while you do it. June is seven. She comes to the garden straight from school every day, with her shoes in her bag and her grandmother's old phone in her fist.

June sits on the bench by the water tap and watches videos. In them a woman cooks real food that is far too small to eat. Rosa knows this much because she has walked past the screen a hundred times. She has seen little pans, a little loaf, a little knife and a pair of hands, and never a face.

The arrangement is fair. Rosa ties beans and June watches. Every so often June says something out loud, to nobody, about a golden pan or about a woman whose name Rosa does not know. Rosa answers "mm". She has been answering "mm" since Easter. It costs her nothing.

One warm evening the bells of St. Anne's are practising, and the sound carries across the railway cutting to the garden. June says something, and Rosa says "mm". This time she hears herself say it, and she does not like the sound of it.

So she puts the string down and sits on the bench, which is warm from the sun. "Show me the one with the bread," she says.

It takes a while. Rosa watches a pair of hands make a loaf the size of a thumbnail. Nobody speaks in the video. There is only music. Rosa asks which of the little dishes June would eat if she could. "The eggs, obviously," June says, and goes on to the next video. Rosa sits through part of that one too. Then she goes back to the beans, which have not tied themselves.

Elena comes to the gate for her beans and says the light is going. It is.

The next afternoon June is on the bench with the phone, and Rosa is at the poles with the string, exactly as before. But now, when Rosa wants to say something about the videos, she has a name for them. She uses it. The sentence goes out across the garden, and it lands or it does not land, the way sentences do.

 NOTES

A note from us. It is ordinary not to know the names of what a child watches. One way is to watch one whole video with them and ask something that has no right answer. We offer it for its own sake and for nothing else. It may give you a little of what they know, or only one name; either way the try has happened. It costs whatever you had your hands in.

Where this comes from: In a review of family studies, using media together went with fewer media-related problems, as rules did – seven studies, the links tiny. Whether one way did better was not tested. Of the seven studies behind it, one was of children. Most were of teenagers. Another found watching together went with more media time and aggression. In a European survey, parents who guided their children's internet use reported more kinds of activity online, and more risks. Watching one thing together was not tested. Chen and Shi, 2018; Livingstone and colleagues, 2017; Collier and colleagues, 2016.

Families were studied as they live, not tested: links at one moment, not showing what came first.

This is not a way to change how long your child is on a screen, or what they meet there.

Not for everyone: not for an afternoon with nothing spare. If you are worried about something real, that is a different situation, and talking with someone who can help comes first.

 NOTES

The Margin

Marko, this one reached you through knowing what is used, and openly. Here is a story about Nate, who has his son with him for half of each week.

Most mornings Nate buys a paper newspaper at Ray's stand, under the green awning. In the evening he reads it at the table with a pen in his hand, because a man has to have something to do with his hands.

Ollie is eleven. He lives at Nate's apartment for the second half of each week. The apartment has one table. Nate's computer stands at one end of it, where Nate works. At the other end there is a placemat with a burn on it. Between the two ends there is room for a newspaper, and for an argument about a newspaper.

In February it is dark by the time Ollie comes in. He sits down at the computer end and plays a game online with other players. He wears a headset, earphones with a microphone, so that he can talk to them. For the first while he keeps his coat on. Nate reads at the other end. It is a good arrangement, and both of them know it.

Ollie says a name out loud. It is the name of one of the other players, who has just done something remarkable with a vehicle in the game. Nate has heard this name several evenings in a row. Tonight it very nearly fits into his crossword, the word puzzle in the paper. He has the pen in his hand anyway.

So he moves. He carries the paper and his coffee down to the burnt placemat, at Ollie's shoulder. He asks what things in the game are called. He writes the names in a column, in pen, in the margin of page four, under the crossword.

"Why are you writing that down?" Ollie says.

"Because I can't keep it in my head," Nate says. "And the settings on this computer are mine, the limits I put on it. You know the ones I mean."

"I know the ones you mean."

It costs Nate the newspaper, which he does not finish. It also costs him a full account of the vehicle, which he has to hear to the end. Some evenings he will take his coffee back to his own end of the table. That is how a week goes.

Ollie plays on, in the same chair, with the same headset. In the margin of page four there is a column of words in Nate's handwriting. They mean nothing to anybody else. By March they will mean nothing to Nate either. He has them anyway.

 NOTES

A note from us. Knowing what your child uses is one thing, and being in the room is another. A week split between two homes makes both harder. One way is to sit at the same table while your child plays, and to ask what things are called. Say plainly which settings you have put on the device. What matters is that your child has heard you say it. It costs whatever else you would have done while they played.

Where this comes from: a study that followed American children in the middle grades through one school year. Where parents set more limits on how much and which media their children used, and talked with them about it, children used less media and less violent media, and those children later slept more, had better marks, and were more helpful and less aggressive. The links were small. Sitting at the same table and asking the names of things was not tested. Gentile and colleagues, 2014.

Families were followed over time, not tested: the order of events is clearer, the cause is not.

This does not tell you what you cannot see, or promise you will be told more.

Not for everyone: if your child also lives in another home with other settings, say only which are on in yours. Not for when you fear something real is happening to your child; that is a different situation, and talking with someone who can help comes first.

 NOTES

[illegible]

Behind the Vinegar

Marko, this one reached you through what can be switched on without asking. Here is a story about Lena, whose tablet lies where the whole family can pick it up.

The tablet lives on top of the bread bin. Nobody ever decided that. The bread bin stands next to a socket, and it is the only socket in the kitchen that is not behind the table. So the tablet is charged there, and it stays there, between the bread bin and the tin of teabags. It looks like something that has moved in.

Everyone uses it. Lena looks up bus times on it, because it is nearer than her phone. Cal, who is ten, has it in his hands before his chair is warm. Mara uses it for her homework and complains about it while she does. It belongs to the whole household, and nobody asks before taking it.

It is April and raining, and the first green is showing in the gutters of the roofs. Lena is putting the good scissors away. They go in the cupboard over the kettle. That cupboard is for things that get lost if they are left out. She stands there with the cupboard door open and the tablet in her other hand.

She puts the tablet in. It fits, behind the bottle of vinegar.

It stays there until the evening. Then Lena wants the bus times for Saturday. She wants the good bus, the one that goes out to her mother's. She takes the tablet down, looks up the times at the counter, and leaves the tablet on the counter. Cal finds it there and carries it to the table. The chair is not warm yet.

Lena thinks about the cupboard while she does the washing up. If the tablet lives behind the vinegar, somebody has to take it down every time, and that somebody is her. She would be one more door in her own kitchen, and her week is already all doors. If it lives on the bread bin, then it lives on the bread bin. She knows exactly what that looks like. She has been looking at it for years.

By Friday the tablet is back on top of the bread bin. Some things stay where they are. The big clock at Union Station has run two minutes fast for years. Nobody has fixed it, and it has never once made Lena early.

A note from us. No practice has been tested here, so this note offers none. Where a screen lives in a home is usually decided by sockets, tables and the shape of the rooms. The story shows what it costs to move one. Every use then passes through a person with a week of her own.

 NOTES

Where this comes from: a survey of families with children from three to ten in Portugal, done in 2009 and 2010, where having game equipment in the home went with more time on games and computers, as the parents reported it; all of it measured at one moment. A questionnaire developed with parents of six- to ten-year-olds, which asks where the household's screens are and what the habits around them are, was checked for whether parents answer it the same way twice. Neither looked at what happens when a tablet is moved into a cupboard. Jago and colleagues, 2012; Klakk and colleagues, 2020.

A survey at one moment and a questionnaire checked twice, partly with children younger than yours: a link, not a test, and no practice was tried.

This says nothing about what your child would do with more or less within reach.

Not for everyone: in a small home there is often only one place a thing can go, and where a screen is also the phone book and the bus timetable, putting it away puts those away too.

Your answers and this report are handled by the association HDI – Human Digital Intelligence, Zagreb, which is responsible for them. For anything about your data, write to info@hdi.vision.

Thank you for taking part. What you gave was your own view of your home, and that is all this report rests on.

If anything in this report upsets you, or you want to talk it over with someone, write to info@hdi.vision and a person will answer. Questions about your data go to the same address.

Your answers are kept for twelve months from the day you finished answering, then deleted. You can ask for them to be deleted sooner at any time by quoting your pass code.

This is a self-assessment, not a medical or clinical examination and not a diagnosis. Your answers are used for your own report and are not used for research. They come under the data-protection measures set out for them by the association HDI – Human Digital Intelligence, and nothing else.

 NOTES